

Tips For Supporting Children During Stressful Times

- **Encourage family members to pay special attention to one another.**
Children need to feel close to their family as they gain strength from supportive family relationships. Hugs are most helpful.
- **Maintain daily routines and schedules as much as possible.**
Familiar routines help children feel safe. Focus especially on children's needs for nutrition, sleep, and exercise during stressful times.
- **Provide children resources for diversion, comfort, and relaxation.**
Help children release tension. Provide opportunities for play, physical exercise, and activities that promote relaxation such as listening to favorite music.
- **Be aware of what children are seeing and hearing.**
If children are upset by news stories, threatening images, and adult conversations, it may be wise to limit television viewing and/or exposure to adult conversations.
- **Allow all children opportunities to verbalize their feelings and concerns.**
Children respond to situations differently based on their developmental stage, personality, and past experiences.
- **Be sensitive to nonverbal behavior, as children may not be able to verbally express fears and feelings.**
- **Answer children's questions and respond to their concerns calmly and honestly.**
The calm approach of adults provides security. Children can sense adult fears and anxieties even when they are not shared verbally.
- **Reassure children that they are not alone and that adults will help to keep them safe.**
- **Offer hope.**
Faith can provide immense support. Help children identify ways they might help others. Children gain security and a sense of control if they can assist in some way.